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CONSUMERS SEEK EASY-OPEN PACKAGES

Convenience affects product decisions

Consumers in each of four age groups surveyed in 1987 by PACKAGING magazine reported that they look for package-opening convenience when considering a food product purchase.

In all groups, more consumers called this package characteristic "extremely important" than either "somewhat important" or "not very/not at all important."

The percentage of consumer respondents in the "extremely important" category rose with age, from less than half of those under 25 to nearly three-quarters of those 65 and over.

The consumer survey questionnaire was sent to 1,000 households. Of that number, 721 consumers responded with their opinions on a wide range of packaging-related issues and trends.

BUYING OF FOOD AWAY FROM HOME RISES

Demographics alter growth of foodservice

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its recently released 1985 Consumer Expenditure Diary Survey, reported that weekly spending on food away from home has risen.

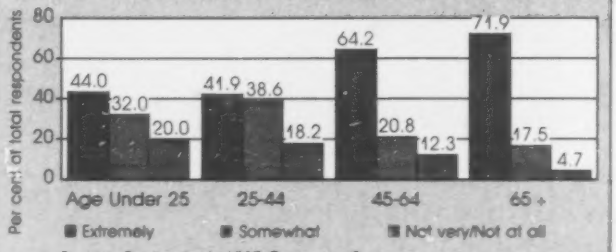
Expenditures increased from $15.77 per household in 1980-81 to $21.32 in 1985.

Not all segments of the foodservice industry can be expected to grow equally in the future, according to Cahners Economics, Newton, Mass. Fast-food restaurants might see a drop in customers over the next decade or so while family-style restaurants experience a slight boom.

One reason is that the number of 18-24 year olds—big patrons of fast-food—has declined about 10 per cent since 1980. A second reason is that the number of people in this age group living with parents—and eating at home—increased from 48.4 per cent in 1980 to 52.6 per cent in 1986.

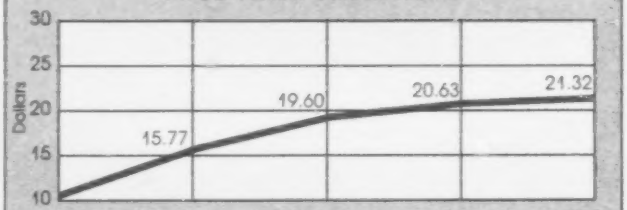
Thirdly, since those born in the peak Baby Boom years are now turning 30 and the oldest of the Baby Boomers are already 40, the number of married couples has increased. Cahners said married couples made up 12 per cent of new households formed in 1983-84, 35 per cent in 1985, and 60 per cent in 1986. That may prove to be good news for family-style and moderately priced full-service restaurants.

IMPORTANCE OF 'CONVENIENT TO OPEN' WHEN CONSIDERING FOOD PRODUCT PURCHASE



Source: Packaging's 1987 Consumer Survey

WEEKLY SPENDING ON FOOD AWAY FROM HOME



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

PACKAGING LEADTIMES (In weeks)

	Avg.	Dec. '87	Dec. '86
Metal cans	2.8	2.8	3.4
Composite cans	2.8	2.6	3.2
Glass containers	3.9	3.6	4.3
Plastic bottles	3.0	2.7	3.9
Plastic film	3.8	3.2	3.5
Laminates	4.3	3.8	5.4
Corrugated containers	2.7	2.7	2.9
Multiwall bags	3.8	3.8	3.7
Kraft paper	3.0	3.0	3.0
Folding cartons	3.6	3.9	4.0
Fiber drums	2.6	2.5	3.5
Industrial crates	2.6	2.6	3.3
Strapping	2.5	2.5	2.7
Steel drums (shipping)	2.6	2.6	2.8
Pallets	2.6	2.5	2.7

Source: Purchasing, a Cahners Publication

TRANSACTION PRICES

	Dec. '87	Nov. '87	Dec. '86
Aluminum can stock ($/lb.)	1.03	1.03	1.06
LDPE/liner($/lb.)	.38	.38	.29
LDPE/clarity($/lb.)	.39	.39	.33
LLDPE/butene($/lb.)	.39	.39	.27
LLDPE/octene($/lb.)	.49	.49	.35
HDPE/blow molding($/lb.)	.41	.41	.33
HDPE/film grade($/lb.)	.42	.42	.35
Polystyrene/general purpose($/lb.)	.58	.54	.34
Polystyrene/impact($/lb.)	.61	.58	.35
PVC/general purpose($/lb.)	.40	.40	.31
PP/homopolymer($/lb.)	.46	.46	.35
PP/copolymer($/lb.)	.56	.56	.45
ABS($/lb.)	1.14	1.07	.99
Unbleached kraft/shipping sack($/ton)	480	480	430
Unbleached kraft/grocery sack($/ton)	430	430	375
Linerboard, 42 lb., east($/ton)	360	360	320
Linerboard, 42 lb., west($/ton)	380	380	320
Corrugated med., semichemical($/ton)	350	350	300
Recycled folding boxboard, clay coated($/ton)	410	410	390
Recycled folding boxbd., chipbd.($/ton)	330	330	300
Bleached kraft, folding carton($/ton)	625	625	610

Source: Purchasing, a Cahners publication

PACKAGING PAY DIFFERS REGIONALLY

North Central leads in earners of $50,000

Regional demographic data generated by PACKAGING's 1987 salary survey indicate that, of those respondents making over $50,000 a year, almost 32 per cent live in the North Central region of the United States. Another 24 per cent of them live in the Northeast. The South and West each are home to 22 per cent of those in that income bracket.

The North Central region also ranks first in seniority, with 31 per cent of respondents having over 20 years on the job. Another 25 per cent of those with over 20 years' seniority live in the South. Northeast and Western regions are tied for third—each having 22 per cent.

Also from the survey: The average respondent has been on his or her present job 8.6 years; 22 per cent of all respondents have been on the job less than three years; and 10 percent of them have over 20 years' seniority.

MORE STATS . . .

The Italian Trade Commission, Chicago, reported that the **Italian packaging machinery** industry now holds a 25 per cent share of total U.S. imports in this field. This places Italy second only to West Germany, which has a 29 per cent share . . . According to a major player in the market, **shipments of aluminum cans** for beer were expected to total 37 billion units in 1987. Shipments of aluminum cans for all beverages reached 69 billion units in 1986 and were seen increasing to 72 billion units last year . . . The Society of the Plastics Industry, Washington, D.C., announced that **production of plastic resins** for the first seven months of 1987 totaled 27.8 billion pounds—a 9.4 per cent increase over the same period in 1986 . . . The American Paper Institute, New York City, pegged manufacturing capacity for **primary paper and paperboard** in U.S. mills at roughly 78 million pounds in 1987. This represents an increase of 3 per cent over 1986, the highest single-year gain in the past 14 years . . . Consumption of **polymer blends and alloys** will exceed 800 million pounds in 1992, reported Kline & Co., Fairfield, N.J. This level of consumption represents an annual growth rate of 8 per cent.

NOTE

ONLY THE FOLLOWING PAGES OF THIS

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